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Gwadar

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif exchanging views with a delegation of PML-N leadership from Balochistan during meeting held in Islamabad.

Senate approves bill allowing ECP to announce election dates

Bill also limits period of disqualification of a person to maximum of five years

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate took a significant step towards electoral reforms as it approved the Election Act (Amendment) Bill 2023 in a session held on Friday.

The Bill, presented by Minister of State for Law and Justice Senator Shahadat Awan, aimed at amending the Election Act 2017.

He said that the Election Act (Amendment) Bill 2023 sought to bring about

changes in the current electoral framework and processes, with the primary objective of enhancing transparency and fairness in the electoral system.

He informed that the Bill would now progress to the National Assembly for further review and approval before it could be enacted into law.

Shahadat said the approval of the Election Act (Amendment) Bill 2023 by the Senate represented a significant milestone in the country's journey towards electoral reforms.

The government and Opposition will now engage in further deliberations and discussions in the National Assembly, ensuring a thorough examination of the proposed amendments, he said adding that the ultimate aim was to strengthen democratic practices and ensure the conduct of free and fair elections in the future.

Govt taking measures to boost border trade: Traders can play important role in revival of decaying economy, says Governor

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that the traders' community can play important role in revival of otherwise decaying economy of the country.

Traders on one hand contribute millions of rupees in the public exchequer on account of the tax, while provide vast opportunities of employments on the other hand.

Therefore, it is responsibility of the government to ensure complete protection and provision of necessary facilities for the traders and industrialists.

These views were expressed by the Governor while speaking to a delegation comprising traders of the province led by central president of All Pakistan

Anjuman Tajran, Ajmal Baloch who called on him here at the Governor House on Friday.

During the course of meeting, the traders apprised the issues being faced by the traders in movement and transportation of the goods in the province. They particularly referred to the complaints against the government officials in this regard.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor said that the government has already reduced the number of check posts in different areas of the province just to remove the apprehensions of the traders and industrialists.

However, he would speak to the concerned federal and provincial high ups for improving the situation further.



QUETTA: Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango cutting ribbon to inaugurate a Departmental Store at BA Mall

Provincial Minister for Home commends: Modern shopping Center of best standards inaugurated in Quetta

QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs, Mir Ziaullah Langove has stated that a modern shopping Center of high quality and best standards has been inaugurated in Quetta city.

With this inauguration, the common men would also be getting opportunities of business, maintained by the Provincial Minister while speaking on occasion of the launching of the

shopping Center at airport road here on Friday.

Also present on the occasion were the senator Naseebullah Bazai, Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, DIG police, Ghulam Azfar Mahesar, Abdullah Hameed Gul and other high ups and dignitaries.

Speaking on the occasion, Mir Ziaullah said that he is pleased to be part of the launching ceremony of the shopping mall.

Asad Gilani assumes charge as Nadra chairman



ISLAMABAD (INP) - Asad Rehman Gilani, a grade 22 officer of the

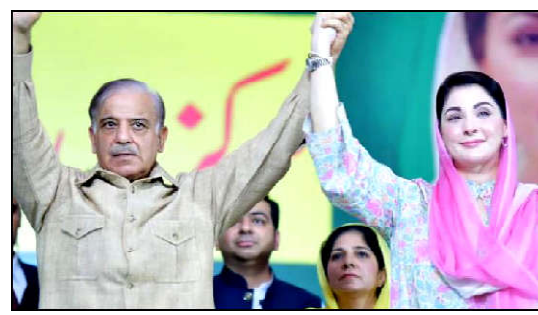
Pakistan Administrative Service and currently serving as secretary to the Board of Investment, on Friday assumed additional charge as the new chairman of the National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra). Gilani assumed the additional role, succeeding Tariq Malik, who quit abruptly on June 14.

Shahbaz elected PML-N President unopposed Nawaz Sharif to return to lead Pakistan on road to progress & prosperity : PM

Maryam Nawaz elected as Chief Organizer, Ahsan Iqbal as General Secretary and Marriyum Aurangzeb as Information Secretary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday said Nawaz Sharif would return from abroad to lead the country on the road to progress and prosperity, as the prime minister for fourth time.

Speaking after his re-election as President of Pakistan Muslim League (N) for a four-year term at the party's Central General Council, he said Nawaz Sharif was the architect of modern Pakistan and during his tenure as prime minister, he eliminated energy shortages, laid down the network of roads, built infrastructure and developed agriculture, industry and other vital sectors of the



economy.

He said he would hand over the presidency of the party to Nawaz Sharif after his return to Pakistan.

He thanked the General Council for electing him as its new president and his associates for the leadership positions in the party.

He lauded Maryam Nawaz for courageously leading the party all across Pakistan, despite all the difficulties that came in her way.

He said sixty percent of the population of the country were youth and Pakistan Muslim League (N)

needed young leaders for the future.

He appreciated workers of the party for standing by PML(N) despite going through hardships in jails and facing difficulties, adding similarly party leadership also stood their ground and faced oppression and suffering with courage and determination.

He said Finance Minister Ishaq Dar was working hard to steer the country's economy out of the present difficulties. Those who were unduly criticizing Ishaq Dar had no place in the party, he added.

The prime minister

said the government fulfilled all conditions of International Monetary Fund to meet financial needs of the country.

He reminded that the PML(N) spent its political capital for the sake of the State at a time when inflation was high and international commodity prices skyrocketed.

Despite difficult economic conditions, common man was given relief in the budget and salaries were raised by 35 percent and pensions by 17 percent, he noted adding Pakistani nation was brave and would emerge from the present challenges.

CM requests to increase 33 seats for three medical colleges of Balochistan

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has requested the Federal Minister for Health, Abdul Qadir Patel and President Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) Islamabad, Professor Dr Rizwan Taj to make an increase in the medical seats in three medical colleges of the province for the academic session 2022-2023.

The requests for the increase in seats of the medical colleges including Loralai Medical College, Jhalawan Medical Colleges and Makran Medical Colleges have been made by the Chief Minister in two separate letters to the Federal Minister Health and President PMDC.

It has been requested to increase 33 seats i.e., 11 each for all the three medical colleges of the province. According to the official memorandum, the initiative of approval of increase in 33 additional seats in the medical colleges as per the decision of provincial cabinet would be appreciated.



QUETTA: Former Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly Syed Matuallah Agha meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Dues of NFC Award & PPL not received yet: Despite financial crunch, next FY's budget of Balochistan to be public-friendly: Farah

GoB spokesperson says World Bank's officials' team arriving in province in July; talks to be held for assistance in development projects, human resource instead of loans

QUETTA: The spokesperson, Government of Balochistan, Ms. Farah Azeem Shah has categorically stated that despite the financial crunch, it is utmost endeavour of the provincial government to make the next financial year budget of the province public friendly.

She said that although the financial issues of the province could not be resolved because of non-payment of the share and dues of National Finance Commission (NFC) Award and Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL), the next financial

year's budget of the province would be public friendly.

This and similar other details were shared by the GoB spokesperson, Farah Azeem Shah while speaking to the media persons at the Chief Minister's secretariat on Friday afternoon.

Also present on the occasion was the Advisor to Chief Minister for Information, Mitha Khan Kakar, who spoke about the digitalization of land revenue record in the province.

Ms. Farah Azeem Shah maintained that the province's financial problems could not be resolved yet.

Customs Intelligence recovers smuggled cigarettes of worth over Rs. 300 million

QUETTA: In a major crackdown against the smugglers of cigarettes, the Customs Intelligence recovered huge quantity of smuggled foreign cigarettes in the country on Friday.

The Customs Intelligence sources informed that the smuggled cigarettes of worth over Rs. 300 million

were recovered during the crackdown.

Only from Balochistan, 4.28 million cigarettes were seized during the crackdown against the smuggled cigarettes. The worth of seized cigarettes is around Rs. 114 million, the sources informed adding that the crackdown would remain continued in future as well.

Reserves get boost as China rolls over \$1 bn to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: In a major boost to the forex reserves, China rolled over \$1 billion to Pakistan, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) confirmed late on Friday.

The news of the deposit comes hours after Finance Minister Ishaq Dar informed the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue that China would be refinancing the \$1 billion loan it had given to Pakistan earlier.

"\$1 billion will come from China today or on Monday," Dar had said.

Punjab election and review case: Respondents not telling grounds: CJP

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial has remarked the respondents are talking about expanding the scope of review but they are not telling grounds.

He further observed the real question in case is this the scope of review can be expanded till what extent.

He gave these remarks while presiding over a 3-member bench of SC during the hearing of Punjab election and review of judgment and order act case here Friday.

The Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) while continuing his arguments told the court when high court decides any case then other forums of appeal including intra court are there.

The SC is also to be approached against high court decision. When SC hears any case under article 184(3) then this is first judicial forum. The parameters of all the three pillars of the state are determined under constitution.

Biparjyo cyclone starts weakening

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Very Severe Cyclonic Storm (VSCS) "BIPARJOY" over the northeast Arabian Sea after crossing the Indian Gujarat coast (near Jakhau port) has weakened into a Severe Cyclonic Storm (SCS).

According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), the SCD lies near Latitude 23.8°N and Longitude 69.4°E at a distance of 200km east-southeast of Kei Bandar, 180km southeast of Thatta and 270km east of Karachi. The associated maximum sustained surface winds are 80-100 Km/hour. Very rough sea conditions over Northeast Arabian Sea prevail with wave heights of 10-12 feet.



ISLAMABAD: Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan Bilawal Bhutto Zardari presenting the shields to employees of ISSI during the "50th Foundation Day" ceremony of Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), Sector F-5 in Federal Capital.

FM Bilawal emphasises imaginative, multidimensional foreign policy for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday emphasised that Pakistan's foreign policy must be imaginative and multidimensional considering the rapidly transforming geopolitical landscaping across the globe.

The foreign minister, addressing a ceremony to observe the 50th Foundation Day of the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad here, said after assuming office in April last year, the country faced serious challenges on the diplomatic fronts. However, the government pursued a foreign policy aimed at addressing the national challenges, improving access to goods and

services, preserving sovereign decision making and promoting multilateralism and international law.

He said addressing the country's domestic issues required quick rebuilding of ties, restoring trust with key capitals, and reintegrating extensive engagement with traditional partners. The foreign minister said that Pakistan was committed to forging good relations with all major powers, which beyond US and China, also include Europe, Russia, Japan and ASEAN. He said Pakistan reinforced and deepened the partnership with Saudi Arabia, UAE, Turkey, Iran and Qatar, besides seeing a positive trend in the Pakistan-Africa linkages.



QUETTA: Provincial Advisor Information Mitha Khan Kakar and Spokesperson Government of Balochistan Farah Azeem Shah addressing a Press conference

Advisor to CM for Information says: Land revenue record being made digital; facilitation centers being opened in Balochistan

QUETTA: The Advisor to Chief Minister for Information, Mitha Khan Kakar has stated that the land revenue record is being made digital all over the province, and in this regard, facilitation centers are also being opened to facilitate the masses about the related issues.

Mitha Khan Kakar was addressing a press conference at the Chief Minister's Secretariat on Friday afternoon.

The spokesperson of Government of Balochistan, Ms. Farah Azeem Shah was also accompanied with the Advisor for Information.

Mr. Kakar maintained that the land revenue management system has been introduced as per the vision of Chief Minister Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo. He said that it is vision

of the Chief Minister to provide digital facilities to the general public at the facilitation centers to be set up in all districts of the province.

He mentioned that the registries and land settlement record would be computerized on instructions of the Chief Minister.

The digitalization of land revenue record would contribute in economic development of the province, he believed.

He said that at least 3,000 youngsters would be provided scholarships by the Google under an agreement with the government. He mentioned that primarily, the number of scholarships where were to be awarded to youth were just 1,000, but on insistence of the Chief Minister, the number of scholarships were increased to 3,000.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Abdul Aziz Uqaili presiding over meeting of Board of Directors of Balochistan Public Procurement Authority

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Budget concerns

The IMF's criticism of Pakistan's reckless budget for fiscal year 2023-24 carries profound risks for the economy. The June 30 deadline for meeting the lender's conditions to unlock funding will likely be missed unless the government agrees to review the document and remedy its weaknesses.

It would not be surprising if it does so, considering that it had to hurriedly, but comprehensively, revise its budget for the outgoing year to accommodate the IMF's concerns for the resumption of its funding programme when Miftah Ismail was at the helm of the finance ministry.

Responding to the Fund's concerns, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar told senators yesterday that Pakistan "cannot accept everything from the IMF". So, what would be the consequences if the government fails to pull off the deal? In the best-case scenario, Pakistan would struggle throughout the next fiscal to seek bilateral debt relief and secure fresh loans and rollovers of existing ones to meet its external debt obligations of \$23bn. Even if it succeeds in getting concessions from bilateral lenders and new loans from friendly countries, these will come at the cost of further economic slowdown, the loss of more jobs and higher inflation. In the worst-case scenario, Pakistan will default on its debt, something the government has tried to prevent by choking economic growth.

Moody's has also warned that Pakistan's failure to restart its \$6.7bn bailout programme with the IMF is pushing the country closer to defaulting. "There are increasing risks that Pakistan may be unable to complete the IMF programme," a Moody's analyst was quoted as saying. Without an IMF programme, Pakistan could default, given its very weak reserves, Moody's said, hours before the IMF made public its reservations on Wednesday night.

The IMF has criticised the budget on multiple counts, ranging from unfair tax policies that "missed an opportunity to broaden the tax base", to tax amnesty for a money-whitening scheme through remittances that runs against the programme's conditionalities and governance agenda.

The criticism wasn't unexpected as most financial analysts had ruled out the Fund's approval of the expansionary budget. The statement issued by the IMF's resident representative for Pakistan shows that the Fund is still willing to "work with Pakistan in refining this budget ahead of its passage".

Some argue that cooperating with the Fund could give the government another chance to put its fiscal house in order to conclude the review before the expiry of the programme. Pakistan's current crisis is driven mainly by external debt obligations. Hence, strict import controls have failed to improve foreign exchange reserves. What the government needs to understand is that falling reserves, uncertainty around the IMF programme and policy inaction is adding to the crisis. Unless the IMF is on board, our debt distress will only increase.

Disaster tourism?



Zubeida Mustafa

In an emergency, the best and the worst in human nature comes out for all to see. Unfortunately, the scenes witnessed on Wednesday and Thursday in Karachi's Seaview area were shocking. They did not reflect well on the psyche of Karachiites. People made their way in huge numbers to the beach to 'enjoy' the sight of Mother Nature unleashing her wrath. All this happened as the administration and disaster management authorities issued warnings of the dire impact that Cyclone Biparjoy would have. Karachi may not have been directly in the line of the cyclone's wrath, but the public's attitude left much to be desired anyway. Anticipating the public's tendency not to obey orders, Section 144 had been imposed and the police stationed on the spot. Yet nothing could stop the adventure-seekers out to have some fun.

The people did exactly what the authorities expected they would. How should one describe this cavalier behaviour? Federal Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman aptly termed it 'disaster tourism', while appealing to the people not to expose themselves to the danger. I will simply describe it as the height of stupidity and selfishness — after all the warnings had been issued.

The episode has left me wondering why our people behave in this bizarre manner. We still have to recover from last year's catastrophic floods that left Sindh devastated. What is worse, the prov-

ince is even now a ravaged place. With the exception of some areas where people have managed to reconstruct their homes without any official assistance and where life has begun to return to some semblance of normality, Sindh has a long way to go to return to the pre-2022 situation. Some villages destroyed then remain deserted today as their inhabitants have not returned. Many schools collapsed and were never replaced by new ones. I don't know if the government has even carried out a survey and kept count of the schools that are no more. Where are the children and where are the teachers?

Today, we do not know what is in store for us. Post-cyclone reconstruction will add to the challenge. Even before the cyclone hit, ferocious waves had begun to show how helpless man is before the fury of the elements, especially in times when callous governments fail to fulfil their duties. Still, the authorities managed to evacuate 77,000 people to safe places. One of them is Saleem Dublo, a fisherman from Keti Bandar that was expected to be hit by the storm, who has single-handedly taken upon himself to save the mangroves that the government has chosen to neglect. Dublo knows that his bread and butter depends on the mangroves where the fish lay their eggs. When he returns home, will the mangroves he had planted still be there?

There are fishermen who are worried about their boats. Having been grounded for several days because of the rough weather in the Arabian Sea, they are not even sure if their boats will be recovered intact. Their boats are a valuable asset and the main source of their livelihood. In the absence of quays and platforms to anchor

their vessels, the latter must have been battered beyond repair by the raging wind and waves.

It is in the backdrop of this situation that the Seaview crowds' sense of adventure is misplaced. Again, I return to my original question: why? A number of answers come to mind. The crowds which had gathered did not understand the danger that lurked behind the waves, which were smashing against the Seaview wall. Although Karachi is the only major city in Pakistan that can boast of being located on the seafloor, we seem to lack an understanding of the ocean. We know little about its sense of timing, its moody behaviour and how the ocean can be also a soothing friend but also an enemy, which can drag you away forever. There are so many drowning deaths reported every year in Karachi.

Recklessness has penetrated the people's temperament as life no longer appears to be a major investment worth preserving for the common man.

Most importantly, the government, media and opinion-makers have lost all credibility. People had to see the storm to believe it was really there. The elements of nature have not been helpful. Take the cyclone. We had been hearing about the storm but the forecast about the level of danger to the city kept changing.

The same is the case in all walks of life. Few believe what is first announced. Even the mayor's election in Karachi — a stormy affair itself — on the day the cyclone was to make landfall produced a familiar uncertainty and lack of credibility. Such nonchalance and carelessness on the part of the public and lack of governmental credibility are a tragedy for society at large. Will anything now restore our faith in this country? — Courtesy Dawn

Wheat for all



Tabinda Ashraf Shahid

Food insecurity in Pakistan has aggravated sharply over the past few years, the inevitable outcome of persistent political instability and declining economic health. With one of the fastest-growing populations in the world, poverty, and vulnerability to climate change, Pakistan's road to nutritional sufficiency has been long and tumultuous.

A key challenge preventing governments here from formulating a clear roadmap to nutritional self-sufficiency lies in their inability to define the actual extent and nature of food insecurity. The last national nutritional survey was conducted five years ago. The National Nutritional Survey 2018 revealed shocking but long-existing realities. For example, a key finding was that childhood malnutrition rates have shown little improvement over the past five decades. Other findings were of equal concern: nearly 40 per cent of Pakistan's children were stunted, 29pc underweight while 18pc suffered from wasting. Even in areas near the federal capital, the rate of stunting was found to be as high as 33pc (the lowest in the country!) while the highest at 47pc-48pc was found in Balochistan, GB and KP's newly merged districts.

Though the report's findings will stay relevant for years to come, a lot has happened in the past half a decade alone to bring significant regional-level changes to the nutritional trajectory proposed by the document. For example, the 2022 floods destroyed over four million acres of standing crops causing revenue losses of over \$30 billion. However, estimates for FY22 already showed a decline in wheat production, 26.4m tonnes against a target of 28.4m tonnes, leading to the import of the staple from war-torn Ukraine. In contrast, 2021 had arguably seen the highest domestic yield of wheat (27.5m tonnes).

Nutritional damage resulting from natural disasters lasts not for months but years, even decades. Data collected by the Livelihood Recovery Appraisal-2013 to investigate the impact on livelihood and food insecurity in Balochistan, Sindh and Punjab after the 2012 floods indicated that even after a whole year only 15pc of the affected population consumed nutritionally adequate food — meat, lentils and fruit along with the staple wheat. According to LRA-2013, food insecurity in Balochistan was the highest at 47pc, followed by Sindh at 41pc.

Meanwhile, global events such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia war have also left their mark on the economics of global food insecurity. Their effects have been severely compounded in Pakistan because of the worsening political instability that is also responsible for the current economic crisis.

At present, short-term inflation hovers around 47pc, while overall inflation in 2022 was nearly 20pc, the highest in decades. This has a direct impact on food consumption of not just the poor but also the salaried and middle classes. Rising inflation, reduced purchasing power and a growing population with limited earners have lowered the consumption of other healthy food items, and increased dependence on wheat. The Pakistan Agriculture Council has re-

vealed that up to 60pc of Pakistan's daily dietary needs depend on wheat with a per capita consumption of 125 kg annually. Because of its high consumption new wheat crops are biofortified with iron and zinc to overcome micronutrient deficiencies common in women of reproductive age and children under five in Pakistan. But biofortified wheat flour was already scarce in many cities even before the wheat crisis.

According to the International Food Policy Research Institute's 2022 report, global inflation is already harming some 1.27m children in 44 low- and middle-income countries, putting them at greater risk of wasting and stunting. Volatility in real prices increases the risk of wasting by 9pc on average. Moreover, food inflation during pregnancy and infancy plays a significant role in raising the likelihood of stunting between the ages of two and five years. These findings underscore the urgent need for early intervention to mitigate the impact of food price volatility on mother and child.

The USDA's Global Agriculture Information Network Report 2023 shows that insufficient wheat production is a significant challenge in Pakistan, owing to a fast-growing population. To prevent serious food insecurity, an integrated approach with comprehensive policies are needed to manage food inflation. Conducting a new NNS is necessary to obtaining up-to-date data that helps nutritionists and policymakers assess the extent of malnutrition. Also, empowering farmers through modern technologies is vital. Prioritising the equitable distribution of imported wheat among provinces and implementing social protection programmes can ensure subsidised access to wheat by all. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Govt firmly committed to IMF programme, keen to complete 9th review

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Finance on Friday said the coalition government was fully committed to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme and keen to at least complete the 9th review as it had already taken many difficult and politically costly decisions in that context. Responding to the statement of IMF's Resident Representative Ms Esther Perez, the Finance Ministry spokesperson said negotiations with the Fund were going on, however, it

would be appropriate to clarify "our position" on some specific issues raised in the press statement.

He said the 9th IMF review was conducted in early February 2023 and the government completed all technical issues at a fast pace. The only outstanding issue was of external financing "which, we understand, was also amicably resolved in the prime minister's telephonic call of May 19, 2023, with the Managing Director (MD) of IMF". The spokesperson said

the budget for the financial year 2023-24 was never a part of the 9th Review, however, "in line with the prime minister's commitment to the IMF MD, we shared the budget numbers with the IMF Mission and we are continuously engaged with them even on the budget". On the specific issues raised by Ms Esther Perez, he said as far as the broadening of the tax base was concerned, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) had added 1,161,000 new tax payers i.e. 26.38% to its tax base in the last 11 months.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Two ships namely, Golden Denise and Fuwairit with 7,000 tonnes of Chemicals and 64,734 tonnes of LNG are arrived at outer anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

A total of 05 ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them three ships, Kition-M, PS-Pelican and Dona BIBI are expected to sail on Friday.

Cargo throughput of 30,849 tonnes, comprising 30,849 tonnes imports Cargo exclusively, was handled at the port during the last 24 hours.



FAISALABAD: Display of a goat that got first position in heavy weight/beauty competition during "25th International Goat Mela 2023" at University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF).

Food group exports reduced 0.84% in 11 months of FY 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Food group imports into the country during 11 months of current financial year reduced by 0.84 percent as compared to the imports of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July-May, 2022-23, food commodities costing \$8.380 billion imported as against the imports of \$8.451 billion of same period of last year, according to the data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. The imports of the commodities including milk cream decreased by 10.35 percent, dry fruits

41.75 percent, tea 11.09 percent, spices 30.89 percent and sugar imports reduced by 97.21 percent as compared to the imports of same period last year, it added. The other commodities that observed negative growth in their respective imports during the period under review included palm oil 0.43 percent and all other food items reduced by 18.33 percent as compared to their imports of first 11 months of last financial year.

However, during last 11 months of current financial year the imports of wheat unmilled increased by 34.85 percent.



ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan, Qamar Zaman Kaira cutting the ribbon for opening ceremony of Furniture Exhibition.

Commercialization of 6G expected to be realized around 2030 in China

ISLAMABAD (APP): It is necessary to accelerate research and development of 6G mobile network which will realize the deep integration of physical and virtual worlds, as the next generation mobile technology will be combined with advanced information technology like cloud computing, artificial intelligence, big data and blockchain, Global Times reported on Friday.

The next-generation 6G is the main trend for the development of the global mobile communication industry, and now, the world's major economies are competing in 6G research and development in order to lead the new tech.

China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) ratcheted up efforts to promote the comprehensive development of 6G on June 4 at PT Expo China. The ministry said 6G will almost certainly lead the Chinese economy to a much higher level, and open up a brand-new cyber landscape. China has rolled out the world's largest and also most advanced 5G network. New forms of industrial internet integration are flourishing.

Real estate sector growth vital for economic uplift

ISLAMABAD (APP): President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said on Friday that the real estate sector was the backbone of the economy, which was contributing to economic recovery, employment creation and promoting investment in the country.

Addressing a ceremony organized by Islamabad Estate Agents Association (IEAA), he said that the collaborative

efforts of both organizations helped to solve the issues and problems confronted by the business community, said a press release.

He said the current body of the ICCI was also taking measures to serve the interest of business community and address their issues, adding that it had taken many steps during the last 8 months, including representation of the chamber in CDA Board.

Gold prices increase by Rs 2,700

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 2,700 and was sold at Rs 223,400 on Friday against its sale at Rs 220,700 the previous day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 2,315 to Rs 191,530 from Rs 189,215 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went up to Rs 175,569 from Rs 173,447. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

PSX loses 67.87 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) shed 67.87 points on Friday, a negative change of 0.16 per cent, closing at 41,301.30 points against 41,369.17 points the previous day.

A total of 156,023,085 shares were traded during the day as compared to 149,676,270 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs. 3.746 billion against Rs. 3.606 billion on the last trading day. As many as 323 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 108 of them recorded gains and 183 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 32 companies remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were TPL Properties with 24,009,338 shares at Rs.13.53 per share; K-Electric Ltd.

Cheema, Zafar successfully get approval for exporting more rice to Russia

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister National Food Security and Research (NFSR) Tariq Bashir Cheema, through the scholastic guidance of Secretary Zafar Hassan, successfully got approval for the Department of Plant Protection (DPP) to export rice to Russia by 15 more mills, following the recommendation after a technical audit by the DPP, said a press release issued here Friday.

The development is a major success towards boosting exports and the overall economy of the country. Russia had put a ban

on rice exports a few years back because of pest interception in rice.

However, the ban was lifted in 2021 and only four rice mills which complied with their quality standards, were allowed to export rice from Pakistan to Russia.

The DPP with the support of the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP) took special steps to upgrade 15 more mills as per the Guidance Document prescribed by the Russian Federation for compliance with the requirements for rice exports.



KARACHI: Fisherman start fishing at Keti Bander after cyclone Biparjoy has now reduced.

Weekly inflation increases by 0.20 pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 0.20 per cent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on June 15, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday.

The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 255.17 points as compared to 254.67 points during the past week, according to the PBS data. As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 34.96 per cent. The weekly SPI with

the base year 2015-16=100 is covering 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs17,732, increased by 0.11 per cent and went up to 261.66 points from last week's 261.36 points whereas it also increased by 0.11 per cent for the consumption group from Rs 17,732-22,888. The SPI for consumption groups from Rs 22,889-29,517, Rs 29,518-44,175; and above Rs 44,175 witnessed an increase of 0.28 per cent, 0.29 per cent and 0.20 per cent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 19 (37.25%) items increased, 12 (23.53%) items decreased and 20 (39.22%) items remained stable.

Baligh asks medical students to equip contemporary knowledge of their field

Independent Report
BAHAWALPUR: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that advanced research in the health and education sectors is very important in this modern time. Addressing the seventh annual convocation of Quaid-e-Azam Medical College as the chief guest here Friday, he said that medical graduates should use technology to acquire contemporary knowledge of their respective fields. He urged the students to see for themselves in which eras of Pakistan's history the highest GDP growth

was observed. He said that mega-development projects were completed in Bahawalpur during the era of the Pakistan Muslim League (N). He told that a 400-bed Sir Sadiq Mohammad Khan Abbasi Hospital (Civil Hospital), Drug testing laboratory, Cholistan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Government Sadiq Women University, and other educational institutions were established in Bahawalpur during the period of Pakistan Muslim League (N) government. During this period, he added the construction of the Home

Economics College building started which is completed now. Engr Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that approval was taken for the establishment of Bahawalpur Institute of Science and Technology in 2018 and the federal government has now allocated the budget for the institute in the coming fiscal year. The Governor condemned the incident of May 9 and said that Nishan-e-Haider was awarded only to those who sacrificed their lives for the defense of the country and they deserved all the respect and honor.



PESHAWAR: Governor KP Haji Ghulam Ali inaugurating Peshawar Model Sapphire Hayatabad Campus at City University.

CJ PHC chairs 11th provincial justice committee meeting

PESHAWAR (APP): The Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Musarrat Hilali on Friday chaired the 11th Provincial Justice Committee (PJC) meeting at the PJC Secretariat, PHC here. The committee reviewed the implementation status of the decisions taken in the previous meeting and the chair expressed satisfaction with the implementation of the decisions. A press release issued here on Friday said that directions were issued to departments regarding

decisions partially implemented. The Committee was informed that land at Hayatabad had been earmarked and possessed by the Home Department where after the release of funds by the concerned department, a state-of-the-art Forensic Science Laboratory would be established in a phase-wise manner. The Offenders' Management System and data integration of Justice Sector Stakeholders were also on the agenda.

PTI affiliated NCs chairmen, councilors quit party

PESHAWAR (APP): Neighbourhood Councils (NCs) chairmen and councilors on Friday quit Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), condemning May 9 vandalism, and announced to join Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

Addressing a news conference here at Peshawar Press Club (PPC), they said that they were elected on tickets of PTI as they were interested to serve the people of Peshawar city and later after the end of the party government at federal and provincial levels remained part and parcel of the agitation politics. But, after the violent incidents of May 9-10, they couldn't remain within the fold of PTI. They said, "The manner under which the building of Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) Peshawar was burnt under a pre-planned strategy is not acceptable to any patriotic Pakistani." They hailed the services of the PPP leader Zia Ullah Afridi for the development of Peshawar and its residents. They expressed confidence in his leadership and announced joining PPP. They further pledged to continue their struggle for the development of Peshawar city under the leadership of PPP leader Zia Ullah Afridi.

Ghulam Ali says: Govt make no compromise on quality education, supremacy of merit

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial ministers Adnan Jalil, Saboor Sethi, Gayoor Sethi and Secretary Higher Education were present on the occasion. While appreciating the owners and administration of the City University and its allied education institutions for the provision of quality education at a minimum fee to people, the Governor said that the promotion of quality education was the top priority of the government and no compromise would be made on the supremacy of merit and learning in the educational institutions. He was addressing a function after laying the foundation stone of the Peshawar Model Softer project of the Peshawar Model Educational Institute during his visit to the City University of Science and Technology, Peshawar.

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Interim ministers review progress of development projects of Bahawalpur

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Interim Provincial Minister for Industries, Commerce and Energy SM Tanveer and Interim Provincial Minister for Communications, Construction and Excise and Taxation Bilal Afzal presided over a high-level meeting held at Commissioner Office Bahawalpur. In the meeting, Commissioner Bahawalpur Division Dr. Ehtesham Anwar briefed the provincial ministers about the ongoing

development projects of Bahawalpur Division. Provincial Minister SM Tanveer said that visits are being done to review the performance of the districts on the direction of Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi. He said that the ongoing development projects should be completed on time and all resources should be utilized to provide relief to the people. Provincial minister Bilal Afzal said that the government is taking steps to improve the economy.

PFA DG visits Hajj Nutritional Guide Desk

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) will give a free-of-cost nutrition counselling and nutrition guide kit to 39,279 Hajj pilgrims, who will travel from Lahore, Faisalabad and Multan to Saudi Arabia through more than 131 flights. This was stated by PFA Director General Raja Jahangir Anwar while visiting the Hajj Nutritional Guide Desk (HNGD), set up at Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore. He said the purpose of providing the nutrition kit is to protect the pilgrims from health problems while performing the Hajj.

The nutrition guide kit provides dietary guidelines to prevent various diseases like blood pressure, diabetes, breathing problems and skin diseases. The director general said that a first-ever nutrition program for Hajj pilgrims had been launched with the collaboration.

Accused in May 9 incidents LHC orders for completion of identification parade within 48 hours

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has directed sessions judges and special courts of Punjab province to complete the identification parade within 48 hours in respect of persons accused in May 9 incidents. The court maintained the process of identification parade is very important for any accused. The present identification parade process is very futile. Delay in identification

parade renders all the process dubious. Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh of LHC issued 13-page decision on the petition filed by a citizen Muhammad Ramzan Friday. It has been said in the decision that registrar should send copy of decision to all sessions judges and IG Punjab. The decision said that delay in identification parade is violation of fundamental rights, respect and fair trial.



Minister of State / SAPM for Industries and Production, Tasneem Ahmed Qureshi cutting a cake to celebrate birthday of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto in Sargodha.

Police constable shot dead by unknown outlaws

RAJANPUR (APP): A police constable was shot dead by unknown outlaws at Dajal road in Jampur city on Friday. According to police sources, Shakeel Ahmed was going on duty when some unknown outlaws started firing on him. Resultantly, he sustained bullet injuries and died on the spot, however, the criminals managed to escape from the scene. Regional Police Officer (RPO) Dera Ghazi Khan, Capt (retd)

Sajjad Hassan Khan while taking notice of the incident, directed District Police Officer (DPO) Rajanpur Capt (retd) Dost Muhammad to reach the crime scene at the earliest and ensure early arrest of the criminals. He said that the criminals involved in the crime would be arrested soon and added that all possible resources would be utilized to provide justice to the family of bereaved constable.



RAWALPINDI: Rescue I122 worker demonstrating about firefighting, during session in Govt Post Graduate College in City.

International News

Poverty, climate, regional stability on agenda as Saudi crown prince visits France

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met Friday with French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris as part of an official visit, during which he will also participate in a global financing summit aimed at fighting poverty and climate change. Macron and the prince sat down for a one-to-one working lunch at the Elysee presidential palace. The French presidency said the talks would focus on bilateral relations between the two countries and on regional stability issues, es-

pecially after long-time rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran restored diplomatic ties earlier this year. France is a major weapons and defense supplier to Gulf nations. The leaders also are preparing for a global summit next week "aimed at bringing together private and public funding" to fight poverty, support climate transition and protect biodiversity, the French presidency said. The event is expected to gather over 50 heads of states and governments as well as many NGOs and prominent climate activists. During his stay in

Paris, Prince Mohammed is also expected to push for Riyadh to host the 2030 World Fair's Expo. His visit to France comes as the prince has sought to rehabilitate his image abroad following the 2018 killing and dismemberment of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. While Saudi Arabia denies the prince's involvement, U.S. intelligence agencies have assessed he likely ordered Khashoggi's killing as part of a wider crackdown on any challenge to his rule.



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman poses with French President Emmanuel Macron.

China's Xi tells Bill Gates he hopes US-China friendship will continue

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Xi Jinping called Bill Gates "an old friend" and said he hoped they could carry out activities together beneficial to both China and the United States, in the Chinese president's first meeting with a foreign entrepreneur in years. In a meeting at Beijing's Diaoyutai state guesthouse, where China's leaders have historically received senior foreign guests, Xi told the Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist that he was very happy to see him after three years and described Gates as the first American friend he had met this year. "I often say the founda-

tion of US-China relations lies with its people. I place my hopes on the American people," a video published by state broadcaster CCTV showed Xi saying. "With the current global situation, we can carry out various activities beneficial to our two countries and people, activities that benefit humanity as a whole," he said. Gates, who arrived in Beijing on Wednesday, told Xi that he was "honoured" to have the chance to meet. "We've always had great conversations and we'll have a lot of important topics to discuss today. I was very disappointed I couldn't come during the last four years

so it's very exciting to be back." Xi stopped travelling abroad for nearly three years as China shut its borders during the pandemic and his international meetings since the reopening have mostly been with other state leaders. Plans for his meeting with Gates were first reported by Reuters. A number of CEOs have visited China since it reopened early this year, but most have met with government ministers. Gates stepped down from Microsoft's board in 2020 to focus on philanthropic work related to global health, education and climate change.

At least 15 killed in Canada highway crash after truck hits bus in Manitoba

Monitoring Desk
MANITOBA: At least 15 people were killed in the Canadian prairie province of Manitoba on Thursday after a semi-trailer truck hit a small bus that was carrying a group of mainly elderly people, police said. The crash is one of the most lethal road accidents in recent Canadian history. The crash occurred at the junction of two major roads near the town of Carberry in southwestern Manitoba, 170km west of Winnipeg. The bus passengers had been on their way to a casino in Carberry, CBC News reported, citing a casino spokesperson. "We've been able to establish that at least 15

people have been confirmed deceased as a result of this collision," said Assistant Commissioner Rob Hill, who commands the Manitoba Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Hill told a televised news conference that "sadly, this is a day in Manitoba and across Canada that will be remembered as one of tragedy and incredible sadness." The bus had been carrying about 25 people, most of them elderly, he said. Ten other people were being treated in hospital. Police said the drivers of both vehicles were alive, and declined to say who might have been responsible for the crash.

Russia, Turkey agree on Putin visit to Turkey 'soon' -Ifax cites Kremlin aide

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan have agreed that the Russian leader will visit Turkey "soon", Interfax cited a Kremlin aide as saying on Friday. The visit would be Putin's first to a NATO country since he ordered tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. Putin has only rarely travelled outside Russia since the beginning of full-scale hostilities. "There is an invitation from the President of Tur-

key. Putin and Erdogan agreed that the visit will be in the near future, but we have not yet talked about a specific day, specific dates," Interfax cited Kremlin foreign policy advisor Yury Ushakov as saying. Erdogan, re-elected last month for another five-year term, has sought to maintain strong ties with both Moscow and Kyiv since the start of the conflict in Ukraine. Turkey has refused to join its Western allies in imposing economic sanctions on Russia.

Qatar emir holds Baghdad talks with Iraq PM

Monitoring Desk
BAGHDAD: Iraq signed several gas and infrastructure deals with Qatar on Thursday as it welcomed the Gulf state's emir to Baghdad as part of its push to secure foreign investment in reconstruction. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani was welcomed by Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani at the airport, images broadcast on Iraqi media showed. Relations between the two countries saw a long period of tension under ousted dictator Saddam Hussein, before easing up over the past decade.

Palestinian leader Abbas ends China trip after backing Beijing's crackdown on Muslim minorities

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas wrapped up a trip to China Friday after seeking economic aid and voicing support for Beijing's repressive policies toward Muslim minorities in the northwestern region of Xinjiang. In the statement, the Palestinian Authority said issues regarding China's policy toward Muslims in Xinjiang have "nothing to do with human rights and are aimed at exciting extremism and opposing terrorism and separatism."

ers then issued a joint statement endorsing Beijing's domestic and foreign policies and repudiating Western concepts of human rights. In the statement, the Palestinian Authority said issues regarding China's policy toward Muslims in Xinjiang have "nothing to do with human rights and are aimed at exciting extremism and opposing terrorism and separatism."

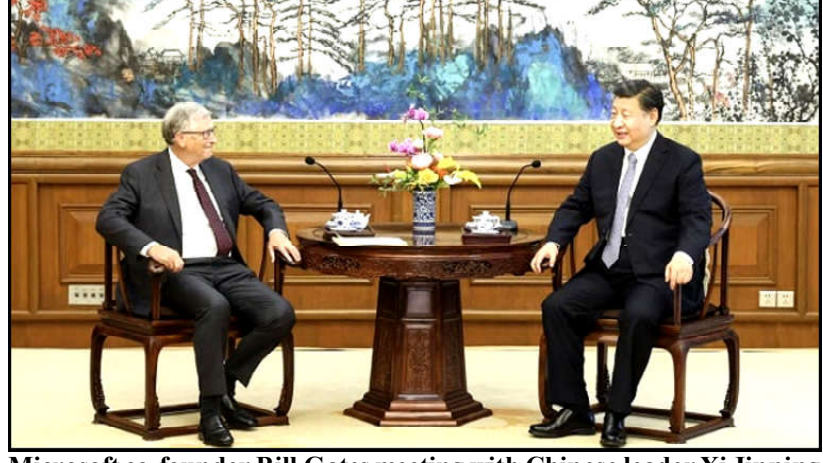
US, Iran in talks to cool tensions with a mutual 'understanding'

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: The United States is holding talks with Iran to sketch out steps that could limit the Iranian nuclear programme, release some detained US citizens and unfreeze some Iranian assets abroad, Iranian and Western officials said. These steps would be cast as an "understanding" rather than an agreement requiring review by the US Congress, where many oppose giving Iran benefits.

Blinken heads to Beijing hoping to calm fears of a US-China break

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken goes to Beijing this weekend with expectations low that he will make headway on the long list of disputes between the United States and China. But he and his Chinese counterparts can achieve at least one thing, say analysts - show that the world's most important bilateral relationship is not about to fall off the rails. Blinken will hold meetings in China on June 18-19 and may meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping, sources said. He will be the highest-ranking U.S. government official to visit China since Biden took office in January 2021. In a pre-trip briefing on Wednesday, U.S. officials said they have no expectation the trip will yield a breakthrough in how the U.S. and China deal with each other. That followed a tense evening phone call with Blinken on Tuesday during which Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang told

the U.S. to stop meddling in China's affairs. China's foreign ministry followed up on Friday, warning that "vicious competition ... cannot be engaged in" and that the United States "should not fantasise that it is dealing with China from a position of strength." "This is not so-called responsible competition, but extremely irresponsible hegemonic behaviour which will only push China and the U.S. towards confrontation," foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told reporters. The visit, which could set the stage for a flurry of other diplomatic engagements including a meeting between Xi and U.S. President Joe Biden later in the year, would show that the two rivals have not given up on diplomacy. "Both sides want to show the rest of the world that they are managing the relationship responsibly," said Andrew Small, a senior fellow at the German Marshall Fund's Asia program.



Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping in Beijing.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a meeting with a delegation from Artificial Intelligence Education Foundation (AIEF), at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

President for AI-based solutions to business, industrial problems

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's IT companies should adopt a global outlook to fully benefit from them. Chairman Soliton Investment Fund, Dr Mansoor Ali Khan, Founder and CEO of Soliton Group, Dr Fauzia Khan, representative of the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication, and senior officials of the government attended the meeting.

The president, talking to a delegation from Artificial Intelligence Education Foundation (AIEF), at Aiwan-e-Sadr, said that exponential advancements in information technology had created new opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs in various fields such as health, education, business and industry, and

and mutually beneficial partnerships among academia and industry stakeholders would help achieve key economic and technological milestones.

President Alvi emphasised the need for promoting skills-based education in Pakistan, besides equipping the youth with employable skills through online courses and short-term associate degree programs.

He said that he had been constantly urging the stakeholders to produce more skilled graduates, invest in emerging technologies, make fast decisions and timely implement policies for the IT sector.

He said that AI-based solutions could also help deliver personalized education/lessons to Pakistan's almost 27 million out-of-school children, which otherwise would consume enormous time and resources. The delegation briefed the president about Artificial Intelligence Education Foundation (AIEF) which aims at promoting AI-based industry solutions at a massive scale. The delegation also highlighted the diverse applications of AI and its benefits for various sectors of the economy.

Pak is responsible country, our defence assets in safe hands: Senate informed

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Senate was informed on Friday that Pakistan is a responsible country, our defence assets are in safe hands.

Replying to the questions raised by Senator Mushtaq Ahmad Khan during debate on the next year's budget, Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar said we have the capacity to defend our motherland.

He said under the austerity measures, no member of the cabinet is taking salary.

Taking part in the discussion, Mushtaq Ahmad Khan said that the share of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the National Finance Commission should be given well in time as it is directly linked with the lives of the people. He asked to exempt erstwhile FATA from taxes for more ten years.

Rana Maqbool said the latest oil deal with Russia will definitely help improve the economy.

The Senate today passed "The Elections Amendment Bill 2023".

The Bill which was moved by the Minister of State for Law Shahadat Awan contains amendments in the Elections Act 2017.

Talking about the Bill, Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar said that under this bill, the Election Commission of Pakistan

will now be able to announce the dates for the general elections.

Former Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani while supporting the bill said that the bill is tantamount to protecting the future generations of Pakistan.

The House also passed unanimously "The Members of the Senate Salaries and Allowances Bill 2023". It was moved by Senator Kauda Babar.

Senator Irfan Siddiqui paid tribute to the Chairman Senate for delivering a speech in Urdu at the Russian Parliament saying that such great practices should be continued in the future.

Nazir Tarar says: No one can dare to cast ill eyes on Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Friday informed the Senate that Pakistan is a responsible state and no one can dare to cast ill eyes on atomic and other assets of the country. Speaking in the Senate in response to points raised by Senator Mushtaq Ahmed, the minister said that no member of the federal cabinet was taking salaries and very minimum perks were being given to them. Only 1800 CC car and petrol at par with federal secretary was being given to them.

Earlier resuming debate on the budget, Senator Mushtaq Ahmed said that International Monetary Fund (IMF) wanted to default Pakistan and creating hurdles in disbursement of \$ 1 billion tranche. Such tactics were being adopted to snatch atomic bomb facility of Pakistan, he added.

He suggested that elimination of elite and corrupt culture besides curbing various 'mafias' were mandatory to address the key challenges to the national economy.

He criticized the government for not giving any concrete plan for debt retiring, controlling inflation, civil and police reforms.

He said that the national debt has surged to record Rs 60,000 billion and the budget lacked any concrete plan to address this grave issue. He demanded that a commission should be formed to investigate who had borrowed these hefty loans and where it had been spent.

He said inflation has also touched to 38 per cent which was even more than Sri Lanka.



Chairman NDMA Lt. General Inam Haider Malik addressing to participants of chairman raiser ceremony of Pakistan Expo on Disaster Risk Reduction 2023.

NDMA announces 1st ever Pak Expo on Disaster Risk Reduction 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik on Friday inaugurated the launching of the first-ever Pakistan Expo on Disaster Risk Reduction (PEDRR-23) to be held from July 12-14. The event was attended by government officials, representatives from international partners, humanitarian organizations, academia, media and members of private sector, a news release said.

The PEDRR-23 is part of NDMA's efforts to raise awareness of disaster risk reduction and to build resilience to disasters in Pakistan. It will showcase the latest technologies and innovations in disaster risk reduction and will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to network and share best practices. The expo would constitute academic conferences, seminars, exhibitions and various youth competitions to ensure maximum participation.

Senator Qadir assures collective steps for economic development of country

QUETTA (APP): Chairman Senate Standing Committee for Petroleum and Resources Senator Abdul Qadir on Friday said that collective measures would be taken for economic development of the country. With the arrival of Russian crude oil and gas, where Pakistan's energy needs will be met, the pressure on the economy will also be reduced to some extent, he added. In a statement issued here, he said that Pakistan had paid for cheap crude oil from Russia in Chinese currency, which was a significant change in the country's policy of export payments dominated by the US dollar. In principle, the way for China to trade crude oil in Chinese currency is open, he said adding that the benefit of oil should be reached to the public. After refining Russian oil, petroleum products should be cheaper by 35 to 40 rupees, he added.

He said that the IMF has declared the levy of 50 rupees on petroleum products as insufficient and there was a fear of increasing the charge by 10 rupees.

He said that Pakistan needed to free itself from the clutches of the IMF, so far, an agreement had been signed with Russia for the purchase of 100,000 tons of oil and this oil was to be brought to Pakistan in two ships.

For the first time in the 75 years history of Pakistan, a Russian crude oil ship has reached Pakistan, the second ship will also arrive Pakistan by next week, he noted.

He said that European countries should also be discussed to set up LNG plants in Pakistan and the TAPI gas pipeline agreement was also a major development.

The Senator said that it was also very gratifying that the revolving credit of the country's gas has been cleared, after the crude oil, the first shipment of LNG from Russia has reached Pakistan through Torkham border.

PM, PPP leaders discuss prevailing political situation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday here held a meeting with a high-level delegation of the Pakistan Peoples Party and had a detailed discussion on the current political situation in the country.

Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar, Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman, Minister for Water Resources Syed Khurshid Shah, Advisor to the PM on Kashmir and Gilgit-

Bilawal, UK foreign secy discuss bilateral ties, climate finance

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom, James Cleverly telephoned Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and discussed issues of mutual interest.

FM Bilawal in his statement on twitter handle account said that he was pleased to receive the phone call from his British counterpart, with whom he discussed bilateral ties.

He mentioned that the conversation focused on the urgent need for mitigation measures to combat climate change and natural disasters.

The critical role of international financial institutions in climate financing and reconstruction in disaster-hit areas also came under discussion.



ISLAMABAD: President JUI-F Maulana Fazl-Ur-Rehman and Federal Minister for Communications Maulana Asad Mahmood calls on the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

BYA delegation visits Jinnah House to express solidarity with Armed Forces

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of Balochistan Youth Association (BYA), which visited the Jinnah House Lahore on Friday to express solidarity with the Armed Forces, condemned the May 9th incidents.

The BYA delegation members, in a joint statement, said, "We are representing the entire Balochistan in the wake of the May 9 tragedy. We have come to the Jinnah House to express solidarity with our Pakistani brothers and the Army."

They expressed their resentment on the vandalism and violence on May 9 and expressed their heartfelt grief over the destruction and damage caused to the house of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. "Those who vandalized and misbehaved on May 9 should receive the same punishments as terrorists because the conspiracy and sabotage to weaken military institutions is anti-patriotism and sedition," they added.

"Desecrating the mosque and the National Flag at the Jinnah House is tantamount to promoting the enemy's objectives, rather becoming its tool," the BYA delegation maintained. They demanded that those who had vandalized the memorials of martyrs and tried to tarnish the country's image internationally.



QUETTA: Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Lango being briefed about cyclone biparjy during his visit to PDMA control room

Pak Army secures 2nd position in Intl Pace Sticking Competition

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Army has secured second position in International Pace Sticking Competition 2023 while rendering exemplary performance at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, UK.

The annual Pace Sticking competition held at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst was aimed to test the quality of mixed drills that had come to close in the UK.

A total of 16 countries participated in the Competition where five drill sergeants from Pakistan Army participated in the closing ceremony, the official sources told APP.

UN Residential Coordinator visits District Headquarter Hospital Gandawah

QUETTA: The Residential Coordinator of United Nations, Julius Harness visited the District Headquarter Hospital Gandawah on Friday. On the occasion, a meeting was held under the chair of Deputy Commissioner Jhal Magasi, Muhammad Ramzan Palal, and attended by UNOCHA's Dr. Zaheer Ahmed, Ms. Rehana Khilji, WFP's Shaihak Riaz as well as the representatives of UNICEF, WHO and other concerned officials.

The Deputy Commissioner on the occasion briefed about the devastated flood and rains last year as well as the process of relief and rehabilitation launched afterwards by the provincial government in collaboration with the welfare organisations besides other related matters. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Palal informed that the infrastructure of Jhal Magasi had been destroyed due to the devastations caused by the flood.



ISLAMABAD: Country Director World Bank for Pakistan, Najib Benhassine calling on Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani at Parliament House.

President PPP Balochistan women wing greets Murtaza

QUETTA (APP): President of Pakistan People's Party Balochistan Women's Wing and former Provincial Minister Ghazala Gola and General Secretary Zareena Zehri have congratulated Murtaza Wahab on being elected as Mayor Karachi.

In a statement issued here on Friday, PPP Balochistan women wing leaders said Murtaza Wahab is the son of Karachi who will represent all sections of Karachi.

"Murtaza Wahab has a huge majority in the mayor's elections held in Karachi," they said and hoped that Murtaza Wahab will play an active role in the construction and development of Karachi.

The PPP leaders noted that it has been proved today that Karachi does not belong to any one party and everyone has to work together for its development.

They also congratulated the elected mayors and deputy mayors of other cities of Sindh.

Rasheed raises concerns over transparency in upcoming general polls

RAWALPIND (INP): Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed on Friday raised concerns over transparency in upcoming general elections as he sensed foul play in Karachi mayor elections.

In a series of tweets, the former interior minister said time will tell the PPP what it has lost by staying away from Jamaat-e-Islami mere for the mayor's seat.



QUETTA: ANP Provincial President, Asghar Khan Achakzai expresses his solidarity with Members of Balochistan Government Teachers Association during their hunger strike for acceptance of their demands, outside Balochistan Assembly.

Balochistan budget to reflect people's aspiration: Samina Zehri

QUETTA (APP): Central Vice President Balochistan Awami Party Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri has said that the Balochistan government has taken the province out of difficult situations and put it on the path of development. Despite all the difficulties, the provincial government led by Abdul Qudoos Bizejo has allocated a budget for each region on the basis of equality, she said.

In a statement issued here on Friday, Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said that the proposed budget would be people-friendly which would truly reflect the aspirations of the people of Balochistan. She said, the Balochistan government will complete its constitutional term.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said that the Balochistan budget would be very balanced and people-friendly, which was good for Balochistan. It will open new avenues of development for the people and employment opportunities will be created, she said.

She further said that in the budget, development projects worth billions of rupees had been laid in every district of Balochistan, which would bring Balochistan at par with other provinces in development. A new era of social development will begin in the province, the credit of which goes to the government of the Chief Minister. Senator Zehri said that in these circumstances, a better budget could not be presented for Balochistan.

Toshakhana Case: PTI chairman files written reply in NAB

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI chairman has not appeared on being summoned for NAB inquiry in Toshakhana case but he has filed reply in NAB through his counsel Barrister Gauhar.

The NAB jurisdiction was challenged in Toshakhana inquiry.

According to sources chairman PTI while challenging the NAB jurisdiction through his written reply in Toshakhana inquiry case said as per law cases less than Rs 500 million don't fall in the jurisdiction of NAB. Determining the cost of Toshakhana gifts is job of cabinet division. Imran Khan said in his written reply today I cannot appear and if NAB summons I will appear on June 19. It was further said in the reply Chairman PTI did not get determine cost of gifts in the capacity of prime minister.

Departmental action taken against acting SP Barkhan; demoted as Inspector

QUETTA: The Police command of Balochistan has taken departmental action against the acting Superintendent of Police Barkhan, Noor Muhammad Baraich in the tragic case of Barkhan. According to the police sources, Noor Muhammad Baraich, actually the DSP but serving as acting SP Barkhan at the time of Barkhan tragic incident, has been demoted as Inspector of Police.

The departmental action has been taken against DSP Noor Muhammad Baraich, posted as acting SP Barkhan, on the basis of inquiry report of the Barkhan tragic case in which three bodies were found from a well in Barkhan. A video had also gone viral on the social media regarding the case. As per the report, Noor Muhammad Baraich had not taken any action despite the fact that a video had gone viral about the incident. Noor Muhammad Baraich had not taken any action describing the incident contrary to the facts, the inquiry report mentioned.



QUETTA: Activists of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) are holding protest demonstration against rigging in mayoral election in Karachi, at Quetta Press Club.



QUETTA: Members of Young Nurses Association Balochistan are holding protest demonstration against not getting scholarship from 14 months.